

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1902

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize funding for the establishment of a program on children and the media within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study the role and impact of electronic media in the development of children.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 20, 2005

Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. SANTORUM, and Mr. DURBIN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize funding for the establishment of a program on children and the media within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study the role and impact of electronic media in the development of children.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Children and Media
5 Research Advancement Act” or the “CAMRA Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
3 ings:

4 (1) Congress has recognized the important role
5 of electronic media in children’s lives when it passed
6 the Children’s Television Act of 1990 (Public Law
7 101–437) and the Telecommunications Act of 1996
8 (Public Law 104–104), both of which documented
9 public concerns about how electronic media products
10 influence children’s development.

11 (2) Congress has held hearings over the past
12 several decades to examine the impact of specific
13 types of media products such as violent television,
14 movies, and video games on children’s and adoles-
15 cents’ health and development. These hearings and
16 other public discussions about the role of media in
17 children’s and adolescents’ development require be-
18 havioral and social science research to inform the
19 policy deliberations.

20 (3) There are important gaps in our knowledge
21 about the role of electronic media and in particular,
22 the newer interactive digital media, in children’s and
23 adolescents’ healthy development. The consequences
24 of very early screen usage by babies and toddlers on
25 children’s cognitive growth are not yet understood,
26 nor has a research base been established on the psy-

1 chological consequences of high definition interactive
 2 media and other format differences for child and ad-
 3 olescent viewers.

4 (4) Studies have shown that children who pri-
 5 marily watch educational shows on television during
 6 their preschool years are significantly more success-
 7 ful in school 10 years later even when critical con-
 8 tributors to the child's environment are factored in,
 9 including their household income, parent's education,
 10 and intelligence.

11 (5) The early stages of childhood are a critical
 12 formative period for development. Virtually every as-
 13 pect of human development is affected by the envi-
 14 ronments and experiences that one encounters dur-
 15 ing his or her early childhood years, and media expo-
 16 sure is an increasing part of every child's social and
 17 physical environment.

18 (6) As of the late 1990's, just before the Na-
 19 tional Institute of Child Health and Human Devel-
 20 opment funded 5 studies on the role of sexual mes-
 21 sages in the media on children's and adolescents'
 22 sexual attitudes and sexual practices, a review of re-
 23 search in this area found only 15 studies ever con-
 24 ducted in the United States on this topic, even dur-
 25 ing a time of growing concerns about HIV infection.

1 (7) In 2001, a National Academy of Sciences
2 study group charged with studying Internet pornog-
3 raphy exposure on youth found virtually no lit-
4 erature about how much children and adolescents
5 were exposed to Internet pornography or how such
6 content impacts their development.

7 (8) In order to develop strategies that maximize
8 the positive and minimize the negative effects of
9 each medium on children's physical, cognitive, social,
10 and emotional development, it would be beneficial to
11 develop a research program that can track the media
12 habits of young children and their families over time
13 using valid and reliable research methods.

14 (9) Research about the impact of the media on
15 children and adolescents is not presently supported
16 through one primary programmatic effort. The re-
17 sponsibility for directing the research is distributed
18 across disparate agencies in an uncoordinated fash-
19 ion, or is overlooked entirely. The lack of any cen-
20 tralized organization for research minimizes the
21 value of the knowledge produced by individual stud-
22 ies. A more productive approach for generating valu-
23 able findings about the impact of the media on chil-
24 dren and adolescents would be to establish a single,

1 well-coordinated research effort with primary respon-
2 sibility for directing the research agenda.

3 (10) Due to the paucity of research about elec-
4 tronic media, educators and others interested in im-
5 plementing electronic media literacy initiatives do
6 not have the evidence needed to design, implement,
7 or assess the value of these efforts.

8 (b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to enable
9 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to—

10 (1) examine the role and impact of electronic
11 media in children’s and adolescents’ cognitive, social,
12 emotional, physical, and behavioral development; and

13 (2) provide for a report to Congress containing
14 the empirical evidence and other results produced by
15 the research funded through grants under this Act.

16 **SEC. 3. RESEARCH ON THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF ELEC-**
17 **TRONIC MEDIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF**
18 **CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS.**

19 Part P of title III of the Public Health Service Act
20 (42 U.S.C. 280g et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
21 the following:

1 **“SEC. 3990. RESEARCH ON THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF**
 2 **ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT**
 3 **OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS.**

4 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Centers for
 5 Disease Control and Prevention (referred to in this section
 6 as the ‘Director’) shall enter into appropriate arrange-
 7 ments with the National Academy of Science in collabora-
 8 tion with the Institute of Medicine to establish an inde-
 9 pendent panel of experts to review, synthesize and report
 10 on research, theory, and applications in the social, behav-
 11 ioral, and biological sciences and to establish research pri-
 12 orities regarding the positive and negative roles and im-
 13 pact of electronic media use, including television, motion
 14 pictures, DVD’s, interactive video games, and the Inter-
 15 net, and exposure to that content and medium on youth
 16 in the following core areas of child and adolescent develop-
 17 ment:

18 “(1) COGNITIVE.—The role and impact of
 19 media use and exposure in the development of chil-
 20 dren and adolescents within such cognitive areas as
 21 language development, attention span, problem solv-
 22 ing skills (such as the ability to conduct multiple
 23 tasks or ‘multitask’), visual and spatial skills, read-
 24 ing, and other learning abilities.

25 “(2) PHYSICAL.—The role and impact of media
 26 use and exposure on children’s and adolescents’

1 physical coordination, diet, exercise, sleeping and
 2 eating routines, and other areas of physical develop-
 3 ment.

4 “(3) SOCIO-BEHAVIORAL.—The influence of
 5 interactive media on children’s and adolescents’ fam-
 6 ily activities and peer relationships, including indoor
 7 and outdoor play time, interaction with parents, con-
 8 sumption habits, social relationships, aggression,
 9 prosocial behavior, and other patterns of develop-
 10 ment.

11 “(b) PILOT PROJECTS.—During the first year in
 12 which the National Academy of Sciences panel is summa-
 13 rizing the data and creating a comprehensive research
 14 agenda in the children and adolescents and media area
 15 under subsection (a), the Secretary shall provide for the
 16 conduct of initial pilot projects to supplement and inform
 17 the panel in its work. Such pilot projects shall consider
 18 the role of media exposure on—

19 “(1) cognitive and social development during in-
 20 fancy and early childhood; and

21 “(2) the development of childhood and adoles-
 22 cent obesity, particularly as a function of media ad-
 23 vertising and sedentary lifestyles that may co-occur
 24 with heavy media diets.

1 “(c) RESEARCH PROGRAM.—Upon completion of the
 2 review under subsection (a), the Director of the Centers
 3 for Disease Control and Prevention shall develop and im-
 4 plement a program that funds additional research deter-
 5 mined to be necessary by the panel under subsection (a)
 6 concerning the role and impact of electronic media in the
 7 cognitive, physical, and socio-behavioral development of
 8 children and adolescents with a particular focus on the
 9 impact of factors such as media content, format, length
 10 of exposure, age of child or adolescent, and nature of pa-
 11 rental involvement. Such program shall include extramural
 12 and intramural research and shall support collaborative ef-
 13 forts to link such research to other Department of Health
 14 and Human Services research investigations on early child
 15 health and development.

16 “(d) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—To be eligible to receive
 17 a grant under this section, an entity shall—

18 “(1) prepare and submit to the Director an ap-
 19 plication at such time, in such manner, and con-
 20 taining such information as the Director may re-
 21 quire; and

22 “(2) agree to use amounts received under the
 23 grant to carry out activities that establish or imple-
 24 ment a research program relating to the effects of
 25 media on children and adolescents pursuant to

1 guidelines developed by the Director relating to con-
 2 sultations with experts in the area of study.

3 “(e) USE OF FUNDS RELATING TO THE MEDIA’S
 4 ROLE IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD OR ADOLESCENT.—An
 5 entity shall use amounts received under a grant under this
 6 section to conduct research concerning the social, cog-
 7 nitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral development of
 8 children or adolescents as related to electronic mass
 9 media, including the areas of—

10 “(1) television;

11 “(2) motion pictures;

12 “(3) DVD’s;

13 “(4) interactive video games;

14 “(5) the Internet; and

15 “(6) cell phones.

16 “(f) REPORTS.—

17 “(1) REPORT TO DIRECTOR.—Not later than 12
 18 months after the date of enactment of this section,
 19 the panel under subsection (a) shall submit the re-
 20 port required under such subsection to the Director.

21 “(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than
 22 December 31, 2011, the Director shall prepare and
 23 submit to the Committee on Health, Education,
 24 Labor, and Pensions of the Senate, and Committee

1 on Education and the Workforce of the House of
 2 Representatives a report that—

3 “(A) summarizes the empirical evidence
 4 and other results produced by the research
 5 under this section in a manner that can be un-
 6 derstood by the general public;

7 “(B) places the evidence in context with
 8 other evidence and knowledge generated by the
 9 scientific community that address the same or
 10 related topics; and

11 “(C) discusses the implications of the col-
 12 lective body of scientific evidence and knowledge
 13 regarding the role and impact of the media on
 14 children and adolescents, and makes rec-
 15 ommendations on how scientific evidence and
 16 knowledge may be used to improve the healthy
 17 developmental and learning capacities of chil-
 18 dren and adolescents.

19 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
 20 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this sec-
 21 tion—

22 “(1) \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2006;

23 “(2) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2007;

24 “(3) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2008;

25 “(4) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2009; and

1 “(5) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2010.”.

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